

intelligence report

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J. Edgar Hoover: The Other Side

At a Hollywood cocktail party in 1958, a well-known actress asked me if I had read "Masters of Deceit," a best-seller by J. Edgar Hoover.

I nodded. She then asked if I thought the director of the FBI had actually written the book himself.

I said I didn't think so, that I thought Hoover was much too busy to write his own stuff. A reliable source had informed me, I revealed, that a task force led by William C. Sullivan—one of Mr. Hoover's top assistants—had written the book.

Three days later, an FBI agent called at my home to verify my conversation with the actress. He suggested that I had slandered the director of the FBI and explained that when Mr. Hoover's by-line appeared in a magazine or on a book, he alone was the author. Moreover, he emphasized, Mr. Hoover contributed every penny in royalties he earned from his writings to the federal government. The agent added that the FBI was most zealous in protecting the well-deserved reputation of the Bureau and its director, and he requested the source of my information. I replied that it was a most trustworthy one but that I would not reveal its identity. The agent told me that my source was "100% wrong" and warned me not to continue the slander.

Last Monday, the respected publishing house of W. W. Norton released "The Bureau: My 30 Years in Hoover's FBI" by William C. Sullivan, the No. 3 man in the FBI until Hoover forced him out in 1971.

Sullivan, who was killed in a hunting accident in New Hampshire two years ago, includes in his book a copy of the FBI cri-



In 1935, at the height of power, Hoover demonstrated use of machine gun.

tique he sent the director on Oct. 6, 1971.

"As you know," Sullivan wrote, "I had a number of men working for many months writing this book ['Masters of Deceit'] for you. Contrary to what you have said, it was not done on private time. It was done on public time during the day at the taxpayers' expense. This is why I recommended to you that the profit from it be given to some heart or cancer research foundation. But it wasn't, and not only until recently did I learn that you put some thousands of dollars in your own pocket. . . ."

Assistant director of the FBI's intelligence division, Bill Sullivan was one of the Bureau's most shining lights from 1941 to 1971. He knew most of the truth about the late J. Edgar Hoover—in fact, he helped forge much of the man's false

mythology—but he lacked the courage to leave the FBI and therefore became inexorably a part of what he tolerated: the racism, the bigotry, the lies.

His book is a one-sided catalog of Hoover's ways, most of which he encountered firsthand.

Sullivan tells, for example:

- How Hoover refused to reveal that the Communist Party of the United States had dropped in membership over the years from 80,000 to 2800 (in 1971) because Hoover was afraid the information would result in lower Congressional appropriations to the FBI.

- How Hoover wrongfully and consistently accused the Protestant clergy of having been infiltrated by Communists.

- How Hoover privately supplied the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy with information for his irresponsible red-baiting campaigns but publicly denied

that he was helping the Senator.

- How Hoover proudly vowed: "There will never be a Negro special agent as long as I am director of the FBI."

- How Hoover antagonized local police departments throughout the country by taking credit for their good work.

- How Hoover refused to cooperate with the nation's other intelligence agencies, especially the CIA.

- How Hoover politicized the FBI, using it to curry favor with some Presidents and blackmailing others.

Bill Sullivan was inside the FBI for three decades, during which he learned that many of the agents in the field were industrious, competent, effective men handicapped by a tyrant at the top.

Toward the end of his career, it came to Sullivan that J. Edgar Hoover had wrought more "damage not only to national security intelligence operations, but to law enforcement in general than was ever done in the history of the country. It is nothing less than disastrous when you have unlimited power married to gross incompetence, ignorance and abnormality."

During the Nixon Administration, Bill Sullivan tried to bring J. Edgar Hoover down. To help him, he used Assistant Attorney General Robert Mardian, a right-wing Nixonian whom Hoover characterized as "a goddamned Armenian Jew." But Mardian moved away when it became obvious that Hoover was too powerful to be dethroned. Death finally dethroned him in 1972.

For more than 40 years, J. Edgar Hoover used the FBI to promote J. Edgar Hoover as one of the world's most brilliant, brave and admirable men. Now comes the other side to balance the scales. It is not a pretty story but surely a necessary one. **continued**